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SR 213 SCR 241
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
TO PROVIDE A STATUS UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THE KEEHI LAGOON SUBAREA IN THE HONOLULU WATERFRONT PLAN

Statement for
Senate Committee on
Tourism, Recreation and Planning
Public Hearing - April 11, 1989

By
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SR 213 and SCR 241 requests the Department of Transportation to provide a status report on the development of the Keehi Lagoon subarea in the Honolulu Waterfront Plan.

Our statement on this resolution does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

As we pointed out last year in our testimony on the related resolution HCR 386, the development of submerged and tidal lands in Keehi Lagoon will have significant environmental impacts with regard to:

1. endangered water bird habitats;
2. the third largest bait fish (nehu) spawning grounds on Oahu;
3. feeding and resting areas for migratory water fowl;
4. traffic congestion to adjacent areas and access routes; and
5. noise and safety considerations related to its proximity to Honolulu International Airport.

Inasmuch as HRS 343-5(a) requires that "an environmental assessment shall be required for actions which:

- 1) propose the use of state or county lands...;
- 2) propose any use within any land classified as conservation district by the state land use commission under Chapter 205; and
- 3) propose any use within the shoreline area as defined in Section 205A-41."

and the leasing and reclamation of Keehi Lagoon acreage is such a proposed action, an environmental assessment is required.

We note further that 343-5(b) directs that an agency proposing an action which falls within subsection (a) "shall prepare an environmental assessment for such action at the earliest practicable time to determine whether an environmental impact statement shall be required. A statement shall be required if the agency finds that the proposed action may have a significant effect on the environment." Therefore an environmental assessment is required prior to leasing such lands pursuant to HRS 343-5(a) paragraphs (1) (2), and (3) and 343-5(b).

To assure that environmental issues are given appropriate consideration in decisionmaking with regard to the leasing of these state lands, we urge that SCR 241/SR 213 be amended to include a request for a status report on the progress of the Department of Transportation in fulfilling the environmental assessment requirements under HRS 343 for the proposed leasing of state lands in Keehi Lagoon.